

MEDITATIONS ON THE LOVE OF OUR LADY.

You have spread out your heaven, Lady, like a mantle, and in the heavens have set the stars that light our way this night, while the wild beasts of the forest are at large seeking to devour us. You have caused springs to rise in the mountains from which you send down secret torrents to water the plain of our hearts, that they may bring forth flowers and fruits in abundance, tasting your sweetness. My soul, an arid soul, a sterile and fruitless soul, thirsts for the sweet drops of this rain, longs for the nectar of heaven.

May your voice sound in my ears, dear Inanna, and tell me how my heart should love you, how my mind should love, how the deepest caverns of my soul should love you. May my inmost heart of hearts enclose you, my one and only treasure, my sweet and lovely joy. But what is love, Inanna? If I am right it is a strange delight of the spirit, ever sweeter as it is purer, ever gentler as it is truer, ever more joyous as it is more generous: it is the ambrosia of the heart which you inspire, for you are sweet; it is a place that can contain you who are in all places. For she who loves you, knows you, and as she knows you, so she loves you, for you are love, you are the love of the eternal sphere. Your lovers are made drunk, losing knowledge of themselves that they may come to you. How do they come but by loving you? By loving you with all their hearts and souls.

O Lady, let some fragment of your great sweetness fall upon my soul to sweeten the bread of my bitterness. Let it drink a drop of that which it yearns for, sighs for, desires so deeply in this desert place of its wanderings. Let it taste what it hungers for, drink what it thirsts for, even while it is still on the path to Avala, where you give us to eat and drink to our refreshment. Till then, Lady, I shall seek you, and seek you in love: for the soul that loves you is always seeking you, and the soul that loves you perfectly is the soul that has already found you.

No created thing creates itself, nor has beauty or goodness of itself, but from She Who is All, Who is wholly good and wholly beautiful; the goodness of all good things, the beauty of all beautiful things derives from She Who is the cause of All Existence. And as She is Absolute Good, it is good for us to cleave to Her. And that we may cleave to Her with our minds She has given us three powers of nature, which make us able to partake of Her Eternity, share Her Wisdom, and enjoy Her Sweetness. These are memory, knowledge and love, (or will). Memory can comprehend Eternity, knowledge can comprehend Wisdom, and love can comprehend Sweetness. And these were given in the likeness of the Trinity, - THE DARK MOTHER, MOTHER, AND MAID,- Whom our memory ever keeps, our knowledge ever knows without deception and our love embraces without desire of anything else. And thus it is in Perfection.

As the ancient faith is once more reborn out of the darkness and the Truth again known on the face of the earth, we should now begin to reflect Our Mother in Perfection as we did before the beginning and shall do after the end. And yet our memory is clouded by forgetfulness, our knowledge darkened by error, our love tarnished by selfishness.

When shall we be perfect? This peace, this calm, this happiness is to be looked for in our Mother's Home: there, when we live in Eternity, there will be no room for forgetting,- when we rejoice in Truth there will be no deception by error,- when we are swallowed up in Her Love there will be no impulse to selfishness.

'O Eternal and True Love, O True and Lovely Eternity, O Eternal and True and Lovely Goddess! Here will be peace and tranquil joy.

I think it is clear that the soul turns away from her Mother not in any physical sense but because the mind diverts her love away from the Highest Good, and, growing hardened in selfish pride, deforms in the soul the Image of the Divine; thus if in selfless humility she directs her love back towards Our Lady, she is restored to the Image of She Who created her. For in this love is the secret of the health of souls, the stripping off of the hard crust of matter that surrounds the fallen maid, the renewing of the mind and the reforming of the soul to the Divine Image.

Divine Love flowing into our soul from above will dissolve by its heat our inborn inertia-

and will draw us up on high, -we shall put off the old and take on the new, - the soul will gain the silver wings of a dove and will fly up towards that sublime and pure goodness of which our nature had its being. For the rational soul is a mirror of the Perfection of The Absolute and it is Divine Love which lifts up our soul to the heights from which we have fallen.

O wonderful created being, lower only than She Who created you, why do you make yourself so small? Do you love the world? Your being is higher than the world. Does the Sun dazzle you. You are more dazzling than the Sun. Do you speculate about the movement of the stars in the heavens? You are exalted above the heavens. Do you search for the mysteries of life's beginnings? No life began more mysteriously than yours. Reason if you will, but do not forget to love: and do not love reasoning but She Who has confronted you in all these things with Herself. She places them before you neither to humble you nor to enrich you but that you may rise above them to the True Reality which shine through them. Why should you pursue the transient beauties of the material world, when your soul has a beauty which age cannot wither, poverty cannot mar, sickness cannot dim, death itself cannot destroy? Seek, but do not look for that which you are seeking there. Desire, but do not hope to have your desire fulfilled there, but only in Eternity.

She who loves the things of the world and turns away from Divine Love heedlessly does not know what Divine Love is. She seeks rest for her unhappy soul in all these things, but finds everywhere labour and misery, sorrow and affliction of the spirit. And she is shackled and held back from spiritual development; the chain of habit binds her, the claims and expectations of kin imprison her, the heavy weights of worldly frivolity divorced from joy fetter her, and even the bond of love and friendship is a hindrance for it is the sweetest of the sweets of the earth. And yet in all these things sweetness is mixed with bitterness, sorrow with joy, calamity with good fortune. Friendship is pleasant to her, but she always fears a rift, and knows that some day parting must come. She sees her joys begin, watches how they progress, waits for their end; and knows that such joys cannot begin innocently, progress peacefully or end harmlessly. And always she lives in fear of death.

And yet when she opens her heart and you, Inanna, pour into it that precious gift, the gift of Divine Love, all is transformed. What joy there is in your love, what peace in your joy, what refuge in your peace, no words can tell. Whosoever chooses you cannot go astray, for there is nothing better than you; her hope cannot fail, for there is only blessing in loving you; she need not fear that she loves you too much, for no limit is set to loving you; she need not fear death, that severer of the bonds of earthly love, for you give Eternal Life which cannot die. She need fear no estrangement, for only the cooling of her own love will accomplish it, she need fear no misunderstanding, for you see into her heart and alone judge her truly. Here is the joy which shuts out fear; here the peace which stills the fretful heart; here the safety which alone is certainty.

Those who long for love, listen and hear of love. She is the most loving, who never wearis of loving, but always, whether sitting or standing, walking or resting, working or playing, thinks of her love; she puts her love first in all her thoughts and actions; and her one desire is that that love should be returned. Such is the love of maids.

And Inanna, whose nature is Pure Love seeks the love of all creatures. She asks nothing more of us than our love, for love contains all. The very least of those who love Her, burns and is bright with love, seven times brighter than the sun compared with a candle, than the candle's beams compared with a star. But she who does not return Her Love has shut the door of her heart and locked herself away from the Light, in love's poverty.

It is the highest sweetness to burn with the love of Our Lady. As soon as your heart is touched by the sweetness of heaven, you will begin to have your joy and delight in the song of the heavens, and every melody, every rich thing, and every pleasure which all the maids on earth are able to devise will seem as the tawdry and cast off toys of your childhood. The eye of your spirit is taken up into the bliss of heaven and is there illumined with Grace and kindled with the fire of Divine Love, so that you shall truly feel love burning in your heart more and more and shall feel such great joy and sweetness and love that no sickness or anguish or sadness may afflict you, but all your life shall be turned into joy; and then because your heart is so exalted, your prayers shall turn into joyful song and your meditations into melody. The Inanna shall be all your desire, all your delight, all your joy, all your comfort; all your song shall be about Her and all your action and your rest shall be within Her.